



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
**WATER RESOURCES DIVISION**

# **SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT (SGMA) OVERVIEW**

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Water Commission  
April 19, 2018

# Outline

- City's Groundwater Resources
- Approaches to Groundwater Management
- Overview of SGMA
- SGMA Requirements
- Benefits & Challenges of GSA Formation
- Timeline

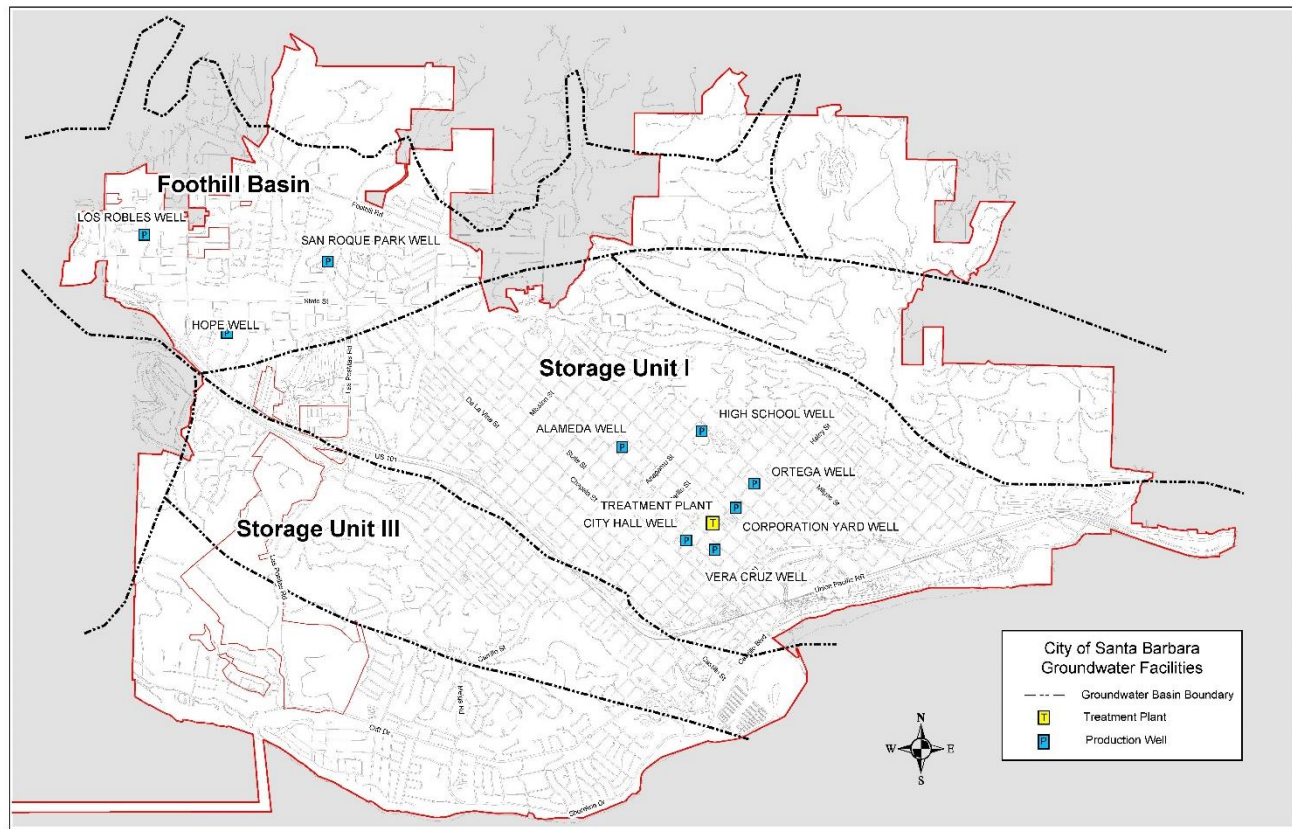
# CITY'S GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

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## Overview

- Critical part of City's water supply portfolio
  - Especially during drought
- Truly local water supply
- Conjunctively managed with other supplies to maintain long-term balance





Water Wells & Groundwater Basins  
Figure 2  
City of Santa Barbara  
GPU 2030



## Santa Barbara Basin (Storage Units I and III)

- Primarily within City boundaries
- City is only known primary pumper
- Storage Unit I treated at Ortega Groundwater Treatment Plant
  - Alameda well soon
- Storage Unit III supplied to recycled water system
- MWD forming GSA for adjacent basin



## Foothill Basin

- Portions of basin exist outside City boundaries
- Localized treatment
- Other pumpers include:  
LCMWD and private wells  
in Mission Canyon  
(County)



# APPROACHES TO GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

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# Groundwater Management Options

- Adjudication
- Police powers via municipal code
  - Only applies within City boundaries
  - Not applicable to water districts
- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act



## Current Approach – Regulation

- Currently regulates permitting of groundwater wells via Municipal Code (Chapter 14.32 Wells)
  - Only applies to areas of basins within City boundaries



## Basin Monitoring/Studies

- City has been studying/monitoring basins for decades, in partnership with USGS
  - Approx. 60 monitoring wells for water level
  - Approx. 40 wells for water quality
  - Developed detailed numeric groundwater model for estimating sustainable yield and managing pumping
  - Multiple USGS technical papers

## Basin Monitoring/Studies

- CASGEM Monitoring Entity (State program)
- Completed potable reuse feasibility study
  - Artificial groundwater recharge with advanced treated recycled water
- Planned pilot study to recharge treated surface water (from distribution system)

# SGMA REGULATORY OVERVIEW

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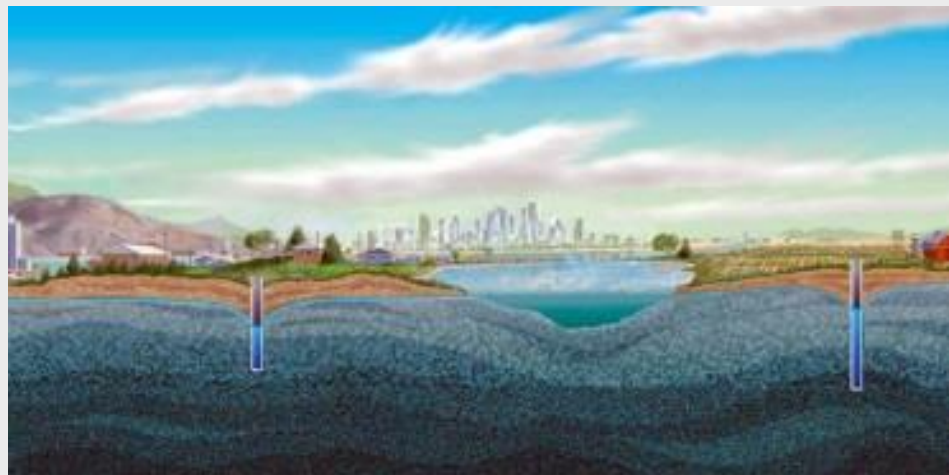
## Regulatory Overview

- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014
  - SGMA
  - Three bills: AB 1739, SB 1168, & SB 1319
  - Establishes a framework for sustainable, local, groundwater management

*“A central feature of these bills is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally.” – Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.*

# Sustainable Groundwater Management

- “The management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results.”



# Undesirable Results

- Prevents significant and unreasonable:
  - reduction of GW storage,
  - seawater intrusion,
  - degraded water quality, including the migration of contaminant plumes that impair water supplies,
  - land subsidence that substantially interferes with surface land uses
- Also prevents:
  - chronic lowering of groundwater levels
  - depletions of interconnected surface water that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of surface water

# SGMA REQUIREMENTS

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## Requirements Dependent Upon State Prioritization

- DWR prioritizes basins as high, medium, low and very-low based on:
  - Population
  - Rate of population growth
  - Number of public supply wells
  - Total number of wells
  - Total irrigated acreage
  - Degree to which persons overlying the basin rely on groundwater as their primary source of water
  - Documented impacts, including overdraft, subsidence, saline intrusion, and other water quality degradation
  - Other relevant info, including adverse impacts on local habitat and stream flows



## SGMA Requirements

- Medium and High Priority Basins require action
  - Form Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) by June 30, 2017
  - Develop Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by 2022
    - *Critically overdrafted basins must develop GSPs by 2020*
- Low or very low priority basins have the option of forming GSA's and developing GSP's

## City Basins Ranked as Very Low Priority

- City's basins are small and have low total pumpage
- DWR is currently updating basin priorities
  - Rankings could change, although no info available at this time

# BENEFITS & CHALLENGES OF GSA FORMATION

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## Benefits

- Consistent with water supply policies
  - 2011 Long-Term Water Supply Plan
- Establishes the regulatory and financial framework for long term management of the City's groundwater resources
- Establishes the basis for intergovernmental cooperation for regulation of activities that impact the basin areas outside of the City's limits
- Allows for cost-sharing of groundwater management activities among all basin pumpers

## Challenges/Risks

- Relatively new legislation
  - Local agencies are still sorting through implementation issues
- New information continues to be developed by the State
  - More to come
- Drought workload currently requires staff time to be focused on critical needs
  - GSA formation is optional
- Requires staff time to implement programs designed to meet goals of GSP:
  - Extensive outreach to stakeholders
  - Develop GSP
  - Develop and implement management programs in support of GSP objectives
  - Submit annual reports to DWR
  - Periodically evaluate GSP to assess changing conditions

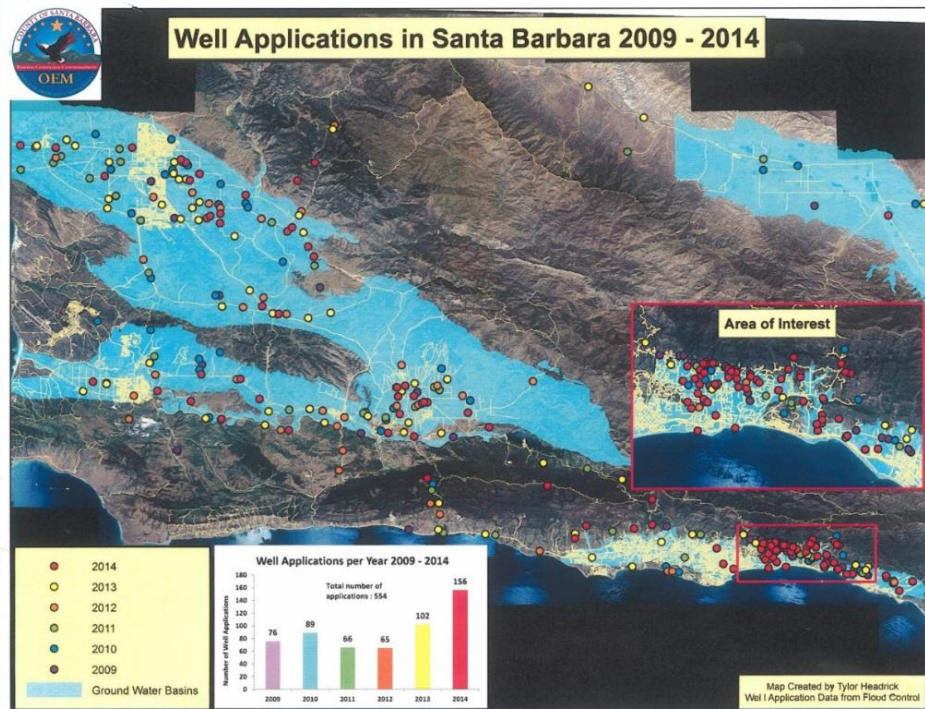


# TIMELINE

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# Montecito Water District GSA Formation

- City staff currently working with Montecito WD staff on draft MOU
- Anticipate returning to Water Commission in 2018



## Tentative SGMA Schedule

- Montecito GSA MOU with City (tentatively 2018)
- City could benefit from lessons learned from other agencies, local and State-wide, going through GSA formation
- City staff tentatively planning to initiate GSA formation for Santa Barbara and Foothill basins in 2021 (3 years from now), unless new State rankings require earlier implementation

# QUESTIONS?

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